

## **New York State School Technology Voucher Program (NYS-STVP)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**February 2013**

#### **A. General/Background**

##### **1. What is the New York State School Technology Voucher Program (NYS-STVP)?**

The New York State School Technology Voucher Program (NYS-STVP) resulted from the \$225 million settlement of the antitrust claims by New York State against the Microsoft Corporation. A fund equal to one-half of the unclaimed and unredeemed portion of the \$225 million settlement (called the “Cy Pres Fund”) will be allocated to eligible K-12 public and charter schools in the form of vouchers to reimburse their purchases of qualifying computer technology products and services. Nearly \$87 million in technology vouchers will be made available to eligible schools starting on February 12, 2013, for purchases made from September 1, 2012. Eligible schools will be able to plan and use this Cy Pres Fund by November 1, 2014.

##### **2. How do schools apply for the program?**

The application process for eligibility to receive vouchers under the distribution of Cy Pres Funds will begin on February 12, 2013, and apply to purchases made from September 1, 2012 to November 1, 2014. Schools that are deemed eligible for the distribution of vouchers will receive vouchers by meeting the following four pre-requisites:

1. Identify a point-of-contact with the New York State Education Department (NYSED) for the Technology Readiness Tool (TRT). The TRT surveys current technology capacity and infrastructure in each school building statewide across the country. It can serve as inventory of current equipment and can be updated by schools and/or districts as technology changes. NYSED is using the Technology Readiness Tool to determine the feasibility of computer-based testing (CBT) and inform future planning.
2. Complete the TRT for requested eligible schools within the NYS-STVP by the time of the application deadline for this program.
3. Develop an implementation plan for getting the requested eligible schools within the NYS-STVP ready for CBT and a technology-rich learning environment. This plan should be based on data collected and entered into the TRT.
4. Demonstrate the priority use of the Cy Pres Funds towards CBT readiness in their planned purchases of products and services.

Once the school has completed the application form(s) which are reviewed and deemed satisfactory by NYSED, the Settlement Claims Administrator (SCA), Rust Consulting (which was approved by the court), will issue the vouchers to the school.

### **3. Where do schools submit their plans and purchase requests for review and approval?**

There are two steps in order for LEAs to submit their plans for eligible schools:

Step 1: Complete the inventory in the Technology Readiness Tool which can be found at weblink: <http://www.techreadiness.net>. We recommend that you complete this inventory for all eligible schools during the month of March.

Step 2: The Settlement Claims Administrator (Rust Consulting), in collaboration with NYSED, will set up an online voucher claim system where a school district coordinator will submit voucher applications and purchase requests on behalf of eligible schools within the district. Specific steps in the voucher application, purchase requests, and reimbursements will be processed through this online voucher claim system. The NYS-STVP online voucher claim system is under development and is anticipated to be ready for operation in April 2013. More information and assistance will be available in March 2013.

### **4. What is the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) responsibility for this program?**

NYSED is responsible for issuing the Request For Application (RFA), certifying voucher recipients based on criteria contained within the RFA, monitoring the program through end-of-program certification, and conducting site visitations of voucher recipients.

If you have any questions regarding this program, please contact Teh-yuan Wan, Program Coordinator in the NYSED Office of Educational Design and Technology, by phone at (518) 474-5461 or by e-mail at [NYSSTVP@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:NYSSTVP@mail.nysed.gov).

The Settlement Claims Administrator (SCA), Rust Consulting, is responsible for issuing, processing, and redeeming vouchers submitted by certified voucher recipients. If you have any questions regarding vouchers please contact the Settlement Claims Administrator by phone at 1-866-303-7288 or by e-mail at [claimsadmin@nys-stvp.com](mailto:claimsadmin@nys-stvp.com).

### **5. Can I transfer my NYS-STVP vouchers to another district?**

No. NYS-STVP vouchers cannot be transferred to any person or entity and cannot be transferred between districts. If your district is unable to make use of all of the vouchers allotted to it, please communicate that information to the NYS-STVP Program Coordinator who will, per the Settlement Agreement, make recommendations to the key decision makers overseeing program implementation on the proper disposition of unused vouchers.

### **6. Do the vouchers fall under State or Federal funding "supplement, not supplant" rules?**

Yes, the vouchers may not supplant State or Federal program funding. For example, if a district submits receipts for voucher reimbursement of items (hardware/software) or services (professional development or technology support) purchased with funds from a Federal program, **either** the items and services purchased with those Federal funds must remain in and directly

benefit the program **or** the reimbursed funds must be returned to the program for the duration of the settlement period.

**7. Does the Microsoft Cy Pres Settlement Agreements in other states affect the New York State Cy Pres Program?**

The Cy Pres Settlement Agreements in other states have no effect on New York State's Cy Pres program. Each state's Cy Pres program has unique and different requirements, such as which product and service purchases are eligible for reimbursement using the vouchers. Allowable and non-allowable products and services lists (such as those one in connection with the Cy Pres program in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin) do not apply to New York.

**8. Is the program competitive?**

No, this is not a competitive program. All districts or charter schools with eligible school buildings that successfully complete the application will be funded.

**9. Is completion of the RFA application staff and/or time intensive?**

The RFA is relatively simple and intentionally designed to take four steps to complete:

1. Identify a point-of-contact with NYSED for the Technology Readiness Tool (TRT).
2. Complete the TRT for requested eligible schools within the NYS-STVP by the time of the application deadline for this program.
3. Develop an implementation plan for getting the requested eligible schools within the NYS-STVP ready for CBT and a technology-rich learning environment. This plan should be based on data collected and entered into the TRT.
4. Demonstrate the priority use of the Cy Pres Funds towards CBT readiness in their planned purchases of products and services.

The sole narrative requirement is a several paragraph statement describing how the vouchers will be utilized to support the implementation of the school Technology Readiness Plan.

**10. Can a BOCES complete and submit the application for a consortium of school districts?**

No, school districts in which potentially eligible schools are located will be required to apply on behalf of such potentially eligible schools for the General Purpose Vouchers and Specific Category Software Vouchers made available in this Cy Pres program. Districts may choose to ask for assistance from their BOCES in developing and submitting their application, but each district's application must be submitted separately. In addition, the application narrative should explain how the vouchers will be utilized to support the implementation of the school Technology Readiness Plan.

## **B. Eligibility**

### **1. What are the eligibility requirements to apply for the program vouchers?**

Public K-12 school districts may apply on behalf of their eligible schools. "Eligible schools" are defined in the Settlement Agreement as all public kindergarten through grade twelve schools, BOCES, direct-funded charter schools, and State Special Schools in which at least 50 percent of the attending students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

To complete the Technology Readiness Tool, please visit <http://www.techreadiness.net>. To request access to the Technology Readiness Tool as a district or school point-of-contact, please e-mail [edtech@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:edtech@mail.nysed.gov).

### **2. If a district has an average of 50 percent NSLP eligibility, are all schools in the district eligible?**

Eligibility is determined at the school level, not the district level. Only school buildings with 50 percent NSLP eligibility within a district are eligible.

### **3. If a district has at least one eligible school, are all schools in the district eligible?**

Eligibility is determined on a school-by-school basis. Only schools that serve students from public elementary, middle, and high schools in which at least 50 percent of the attending students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program will be considered eligible.

### **4. What school year does the reference “currently-enrolled students” refer to?**

For the original Cy Pres allocation, the “currently-enrolled students” reference refers to the students enrolled in school during the 2011-12 school year only.

## **C. Voucher Distribution**

### **1. How will vouchers be distributed?**

Vouchers will be distributed by the court-appointed Settlement Claims Administrator to eligible schools identified through an application process established by NYSED. 50 percent of the total amount will be in the form of General Purpose Vouchers and 50 percent will be in the form of Specific Category Software Vouchers.

### **2. Do the vouchers have to be distributed equally among eligible schools?**

No. With the coordination at the district level, vouchers allotted to schools based on their eligibility and student enrollment must be utilized ONLY for those school sites to address their CBT readiness capacity.

### **3. Will the amount of the vouchers be based upon the total enrollment for the entire school district?**

The voucher calculations will be based upon the total number of students enrolled in the eligible school in 2011-12 school year, not for all of the schools within the district.

## **D. Voucher Products and Services**

### **1. What products or services can be purchased with the vouchers?**

Vouchers will be issued in two categories: 1) General Purpose Vouchers and 2) Specific Category Software Vouchers. Eligible schools are required to leverage this funding source to address the priority of the computer-based testing (CBT) and improve eligible schools' capacity readiness for technology-rich learning and CBT. Therefore, the vouchers, (particularly the General Purpose Vouchers) must be used towards achieving the goal of technology readiness for CBT. If a specific school has accomplished that goal and demonstrated that it is technology-ready for CBT in terms of its broadband and networking capacity, and has guaranteed access to technology devices for CBT, then the vouchers (particularly the General Purpose Vouchers) allotted to the school may be used to address other areas of technology needs. However, all purchases using the vouchers have to be in agreement with the terms of the Settlement Agreement (<http://www.nys-stvp.com>).

With their General Purpose Vouchers, eligible schools may purchase specific hardware (listed below) used with any operating system platform, any non-custom software for that hardware, evaluation tools, information technology (IT) support services, and professional development (PD) services. Specific Category Software Vouchers may only be utilized to purchase specific categories of software (listed below) that are published or sold by any software provider. The following list gives examples of eligible goods and services that may be purchased with the category of the vouchers:

#### **General Purpose Vouchers:**

- Any new laptop, desktop, or tablet computer for any operating system platform
- Peripheral devices: printers, scanners, monitors, keyboards, pointing devices (e.g., mouse, trackball, interactive whiteboards, LCD projectors that are capable of accepting a data feed from a computer, etc.)
- Equipment needed for networking and infrastructure (e.g., routers, servers, wireless network cards, or wireless access points)
- Hardware for accessing the Internet through television sets and Internet access for such hardware for students' homes
- Non-custom assistive technology devices for use by students with special needs
- Any non-custom software titles (for use with any operating system platform) that are designed for use on any qualifying hardware
- Hardware warranties for equipment purchased through the program
- Tax and shipping costs for products purchased through the program
  
- Evaluation Tools

Evaluation tools to assist participating schools in monitoring their use of the General Purpose Vouchers and Specific Category Software Vouchers, as well as to assist NYSED in gathering evaluation data on this program.

- IT Support Services

Services that primarily involve the maintenance of hardware procured through this Settlement and the installation and maintenance of software procured through this Settlement.

- Professional Development Services

- Professional development services directed solely at leadership development for school administrators in the use of education technology to improve learning at the site or district
- Professional development services directed solely at general curriculum development and instructional strategies which utilize educational technology to improve instruction
- Professional development services directed solely at the improvement of technology integration for any software title acquired through this Settlement
- Training in the use of any hardware or software title acquired through this Settlement
- Certification training for software and networking

**Specific Category Software Vouchers:**

Specific categories of software offered by any software publisher or vendor, including:

- Operating system
- Word processing
- Spreadsheet
- Presentation
- Desktop relational database oriented towards single users and typically residing on a standard personal computer
- Web-authoring
- Productivity and/or Productivity Suite
- Encyclopedia
- Server, including client access licenses
- Eligible software bundled with a computer purchased with the General Purpose Vouchers
- Eligible schools may also select a license program that gives students the option to use the software at home
- Tax and shipping costs on eligible products

It is important that eligible schools refer to the NYS-STVP Voucher Eligible Use Categories and permissible product/service list to determine appropriate use of vouchers for reimbursement and make sure that specific requests in their applications are approved by NYSED and the SCA before they initiate an actual purchase.

## **2. Who is responsible for determining if products or services purchased are allowable for voucher redemption?**

The review and approval process has two steps. NYSED is responsible for verifying that:

- A point-of-contact has been identified to NYSED for the Technology Readiness Tool (TRT).
- The TRT survey is completed for each specific eligible school for which the application is submitted.
- An implementation plan has been developed to move the specific school ready for CBT and a technology-rich learning environment, based on data collected and entered into the TRT.
- The intended use of the vouchers, particularly the General Purpose Voucher, will be used as a part of the implementation plan for CBT.

Once NYSED grants its approval for the application, the SCA is responsible for determining if specific products or services that the school intends to purchase using vouchers are eligible under this program.

For information on products or services redemption eligibility, please visit the New York State School Technology Voucher Program website at <http://www.nys-stvp.com> or by phone at the toll-free number, 1-866-303-7288, Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST.

**Note:** The SCA will only take questions from schools and districts and will not answer questions from vendors on the eligibility of their products and/or services. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the school or district to determine if the products or services it will be purchasing will be eligible for voucher redemption.

## **3. Must the vouchers be used to purchase a specific product brand?**

No, the New York State School Technology Voucher Program is platform neutral.

## **4. Is purchasing equipment the only option, or can the vouchers also be used to lease equipment?**

The General Purpose Vouchers may be used to purchase or lease equipment.

## **5. Can vouchers be used to provide professional development using school, district, or BOCES of education personnel?**

Yes, as long as the district or BOCES has qualified personnel with specific areas of expertise to perform such professional development activities that is relative to technology integration into teaching and learning and CBT.



**6. Can vouchers be used to pay for substitute teacher costs to allow teachers to attend professional development during the school day?**

No, vouchers from this program cannot be used to pay for substitute teacher costs.

**7. Can vouchers be used to purchase infrastructure that supports high-speed Internet or increase bandwidth (i.e., switches, routers, etc.)?**

General Purpose Vouchers can be used to purchase equipment needed for networking and infrastructure (e.g., routers, servers, wireless network cards, or wireless access points).

**8. Can a district use vouchers to pay for a percentage of IT support equal to the percentage of hardware/software purchased with vouchers in the designated schools?**

Yes.

**9. Can vouchers be used to cover the cost of shipping/handling and tax on purchases of hardware and software?**

Yes.

**10. Can voucher purchases can be made through a BOCES, such that the BOCES provides value-add professional services, including purchasing, installation, configuration, maintenance, etc.?**

Yes. Items must be listed with specific break-down costs as associated with specific equipment or software purchases.

**11. Can General Purpose Vouchers be used to purchase software that is not included within the software categories that may be purchased with the Specific Category Software Vouchers?**

Yes. General Purpose Vouchers may be used to purchase any non-custom desktop software offered by any publisher or vendor for use with any operating system platform that is chosen by the school. Specific Category Software Vouchers may only be used to purchase specific categories of software (listed in FAQ D4) offered by any software publisher or vendor for use with any operating system platform that is chosen by the school.

**12. Can vouchers be used to purchase extended warranties and/or service agreements on eligible goods?**

Yes.

**13. Are subscription-based products or services allowable?**

Products or services purchased on a subscription basis are allowable under this program; however, the product or service itself must meet the criteria for the Specific Category Software Voucher products or the General Purpose Voucher products and services. Software subscriptions will only be reimbursable up to the end date of the New York State Technology Voucher Program, which is November 1, 2014. Any software subscriptions that extend beyond that date will be prorated.

**14. Is there an “approved products” list for schools and districts to use when planning purchases?**

Products are not “approved” by the SCA. The SCA reviews products to determine if they are eligible for redemption as per the terms of the settlement agreement. Schools and districts are responsible for verifying with the SCA that the product or service is eligible for redemption prior to making a purchase. Schools and districts should be wary of any vendor claims that their product or services are eligible for redemption unless those claims are verified by the SCA.

**15. Is Student Information System (SIS) or Electronic Learning Assessment Resource (ELAR) software eligible for redemption using General Purpose Vouchers if they do not meet the criteria for Evaluation Tools?**

For General Purpose Vouchers, eligible software is defined as “Any non-custom software that could be used with Qualifying Hardware.” Only SIS and ELAR software products that meet these criteria would be eligible under the General Purpose Vouchers.

**16. Can districts claim indirect cost on the voucher award and include the indirect amount, as appropriate, on the Voucher Redemption Claim Forms?**

No, indirect costs cannot be claimed for this program.

**17. Can the cost for the processing of the Voucher Redemption Claims Forms and reimbursement payment be redeemed under this program?**

No, the costs for processing the Voucher Redemption Claims Forms and reimbursement payments are not eligible for redemption under this program.

**18. What is the process the SCA will follow for responding to phone calls or e-mail inquiries from school districts regarding product and/or service eligibility?**

The process the SCA will follow for product and/or service eligibility inquiries, as well as information regarding what the school or district must include in the inquiries, can be found on the SCA Web site at <http://www.nys-stvp.com>.

**19. My district's approved application for the NYS-STVP stated that we would use vouchers to purchase a product that the SCA states is not an eligible product. Because it is in my approved application, shouldn't the product be eligible?**

NYSED is not responsible for determining if products or services are eligible, as that is the responsibility of the SCA. The eligibility of products and/or services described in the application was not a consideration in the NYSED review and approval process of an eligible school's TRT data collection and implementation plan completion. Therefore, the products and/or services described in the application are only eligible if they meet the criteria of the Settlement Agreement, as determined by the SCA.

**20. Are hosting fees eligible for reimbursement?**

There are many types of hosting fees. Specific information as to the type of hosting must be provided to the SCA in order to verify eligibility.

Eligible hosting fees include the following:

Fees associated with hosting hardware or software off-site as an alternative to in-house hosting (e.g., by a company that specializes in hosting hardware or software). These fees may include hosting hardware or software (including web site hosting) or fees for initial setup, configuration and deployment of a server and/or any software included in the contract.

Fees associated with hosting additional software beyond what is normally included in the software hosting package provided by the hosting company (i.e., third party software hosting). These fees may include fees charged by the hosting company for hosting the software and fees charged by the hosting company for initial setup and configuration of software.

Fees for manufacturer's licensing and software maintenance and support fees associated with hosted software products.

Hosting fees that are not eligible for reimbursement are any hosting fees associated with Internet Service Providers. This includes fees for providing access to the internet and set-up fees such as installation of any hardware, software or services required before the connection to the internet can be made and used.

**21. Is refurbished equipment eligible for reimbursement?**

Eligible products that are classified as "refurbished" are reimbursable only if they are unused and are purchased from an established OEM, retailer, or reseller. Used refurbished equipment, including "off lease" equipment, is not eligible for reimbursement through this voucher program.

## **E. Voucher Redemption**

### **1. How will vouchers be redeemed?**

A voucher redemption form will need to be submitted along with invoices for purchases that meet certain requirements set out in the Settlement Agreement. Instructions for redeeming vouchers as well as a description of the information that must be included on invoices and receipts will be distributed along with the vouchers.

For information on products or services eligibility, visit the SCA website at <http://www.nys-stvp.com> or contact the SCA call center by phone at the toll-free number, 1-866-303-8277 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST.

### **2. What is the expected turnaround time for reimbursement?**

We anticipate school districts will be reimbursed for their qualifying purchases within 30 calendar days after submitting vouchers to the SCA.

### **3. When must vouchers be redeemed?**

Vouchers must be redeemed by November 1, 2014.

### **4. Do districts purchase the products or services with the vouchers, or do they purchase them with existing funding and redeem the costs using the vouchers?**

Allowable products or services must be purchased using existing funding, and then the vouchers for those purchases may be redeemed for cash through the SCA.

### **5. Who is responsible for determining if products or services purchased are allowable for voucher redemption?**

The SCA, selected by the Court, is responsible for determining if specific products or services are allowable under this program.

**Note:** The SCA only will take questions from schools and districts and will not answer questions from vendors on the eligibility of their products and/or services. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the school or district to determine if the products or services they will be purchasing will be eligible for voucher redemption.

### **6. What is the earliest date for purchases eligible for redemption under this program?**

The earliest date for purchases eligible for redemption under this program is September 1, 2012.

**7. What determines the date of a purchase? Is it the date the purchase order was placed, the date of the invoice received from the vendor, or other?**

For vendor products or services the date of purchase is the date of the invoice received from the vendor. For district services, such as IT support or professional development, it is the date the service was completed.

**8. Does this program have any requirements regarding how long the products procured by the program must remain at the eligible schools? For example, under the federal E-Rate program the products must remain at the school for three years.**

The vouchers may only be used in eligible schools, except that server products may in some circumstances be used for the benefit of both eligible and ineligible schools. So, with that exception, products obtained through the settlement cannot be used in ineligible schools and cannot be transferred from eligible schools to ineligible schools. However, the eligible schools can replace or retire the products when that is appropriate.

---

For additional questions or information regarding this program, please contact the NYSED Office of Educational Design and Technology.

- Contact: Teh-yuan Wan
- Phone: (518) 474-5461
- E-mail: [NYSSTVP@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:NYSSTVP@mail.nysed.gov)
- Web: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/technology/programs/techvouchers.html>